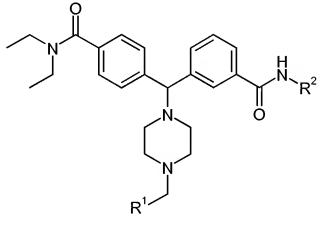
Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A compound of formula I, pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or mixtures thereof:



I

wherein

R^1 is ~~an~~ C_{6-14}aryl~~, heteroaryl, substituted aryl~~ or ~~substituted~~ C_{3-20} heteroaryl, wherein said aryl and heteroayl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, -C(=O)NR_2, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a C_{1-6}hydrocarbyl; and R^2 is hydrogen, ~~optionally substituted~~ C_{1-12}alkyl, ~~optionally substituted~~ C_{6-12}aryl, or ~~optionally substituted~~ C_{2-12}heterocyclyl, wherein said alkyl, aryl, and heterocyclyl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, -C(=O)NR_2, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a C_{1-6}hydrocarbyl.

2. (Original) A compound according to claim 1,

wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; triazolyl; pyrrolyl; thiazolyl; and N-oxido-pyridyl, optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; and

R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

3. (Original) A compound according to claim 1,
wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; and thiazolyl, optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, -NO_2, -CF_3, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; and
R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

4. (Original) A compound according to claim 1,
wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; and thiazolyl; and
R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

5. (Original) A compound according to claim 1, wherein the compound is selected from:

3-[(4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl)(4-benzyl-piperazin-1-yl)methyl]benzamide;

3-{(4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl)[4-(2-furylmethyl)-piperazin-1-yl]methyl}benzamide;

3-[[4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl][4-(phenylmethyl)-1-piperazinyl]methyl]-N-methyl-benzamide; enantiomers thereof; and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

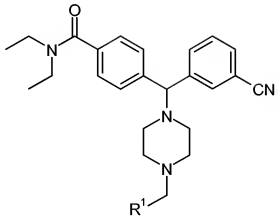
6-7. (Cancelled)

8. (previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

9. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

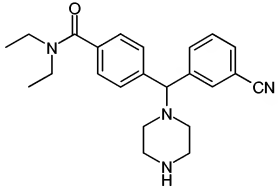
10. (cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula II,



II

comprising of the step of reacting a compound of formula III:



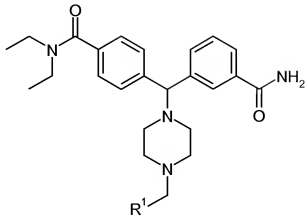
III

with R^1-CHO to form the compound of formula II

wherein

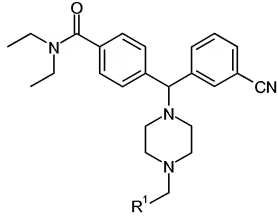
R^1 is ~~an~~ C_{5-14}aryl~~, heteroaryl, substituted aryl~~ or ~~substituted~~ C_{3-20} heteroaryl, wherein said aryl and heteroayl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a C_{1-6}hydrocarbyl.

12. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula IV,



IV

comprising: reacting a compound of formula II,



II

with an akali metal hydroxide in non-aqueous solvent to form the compound of formula IV:

wherein

R^1 is ~~an~~ $C_{5\text{-}14}$aryl~~, heteroaryl, substituted aryl~~ or ~~substituted~~ $C_{3\text{-}20}$ heteroaryl, wherein said aryl and heteroayl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from $C_{1\text{-}6}$hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a $C_{1\text{-}6}$hydrocarbyl.